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STAT

CIA will unveil your dossier — but be patient

IF you want to see the file that the CIA has been collecting on you, all you have to do is ask, and then wait . . . about eight years.

That's how long publisher Lyle Stuart has been pining for his CIA dossier.

The maverick publisher, who has made a hobby of tweaking the noses of both the FBI and the CIA, made his request under the Freedom of Information Act in April 1978. He finally got a reply last month.

"We wish to assure you that we still are processing your request," said the CIA letter of Jan. 18, "and . . . we would like to verify that the address we have on record for you is correct . . . (and) that you remain interested in receiving the information . . ."

The eight-year interval in the correspondence "is much too long," the CIA's Lee S. Strickland conceded to PAGE SIX. Strickland, who wrote the letter to Stuart, said he inherited "a terrible backlog" of requests when he took over the Information and Privacy department last year. But then, Stuart had what Strickland calls a "big, messy case." True.

A couple of years ago, Stuart finally got his files from the FBI after his lawyer threatened to sue. They amounted to about 6000 pages — "the second largest file after Al Capone," a chuckling FBI staffer told him, Stuart recalled.

Stuart is a former treasurer of Fair Play for Cuba, a pro-Castro group that, among others, Lee Harvey Oswald belonged to, and has visited Cuba several times as recently as last year.

He has also published a battalion of books critical of the FBI and CIA, and among his authors is ex-CIA agent Philip Agee. An article by Agee in a Washington-based leftist magazine in 1975 blew the cover of a CIA man in Greece, who was

assassinated shortly thereafter.

Agee is working on a new book for Stuart. As Stuart tells it, five chapters of Agee's forthcoming *On the Run* have so far been submitted to the CIA censors — as they must be under the standard lifetime secrecy agreement all agents must sign — and not one word has been cut.

Strickland said the CIA has spent seven years making sure it could give Stuart the parts of his file that came from other agencies, mostly the FBI. How big is his CIA file? "Oh, just eye-balling it here," said Strickland, "I'd say about nine inches."

The information must be fairly stale by now. The CIA was barred from domestic spying in 1976 after the Church Committee hearings.

The CIA man said Stuart should receive his secrets within a month — though he cautioned, "I always hate to hazard a guess."